



April 25, 2021.

TO: Credentialing Review Committee Chair, Shane Fleming and members:

RE: Public Hearing April 26, 2021

The following is the position of Nebraska Association for Marriage and Family Therapy. We take a neutral position.

Upon reviewing the fine writings of the music therapists applicant group, we have salient observations and recommendations.

The scope of practice of Licensed Mental Health Practitioner and Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner is the mental health focus. Referencing the application, it appears there are substantial areas of overlap.

#6. "...perform similar functions of assessing the client(s) level of engagement in the client(s) emotional well-being, physical, health, social functioning, communication abilities, and cognitive skills through responses expressed in the creative form, including music.... A variety of health-based therapists have similar theoretical orientation of focus determining therapy intervention with clients *in treatment planning: humanistic, psychodrama, behavioral, and neurological.*"

#7. "Music therapists actively create, apply, and manipulate various music elements through live, improvised, adapted, or recorded music to address physical, emotional, cognitive, and social needs of individuals of all ages and ability levels."

#13. "Music therapists routinely serve the general population, and can work with individuals of all ages and ability levels. Infants, children, adolescents, adults, and the elderly with mental health needs, developmental and learning disabilities...."

#14. "Music therapists routinely work across the lifespan, providing healthcare and educational services. As such, they work with a variety of client groups, including those with

- Intellectual/developmental disabilities, including, but not limited to, Down syndrome, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Rett syndrome, Fragile X syndrome, cerebral palsy
- Acute or chronic illnesses or pain, including, but not limited to, HIV/AIDS, cancer, multiple sclerosis, burns, surgeries
- Impairments or injuries due to aging or accidents, including, but not limited to, stroke, Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, traumatic brain injury, Parkinson's disease
- Auditory, visual, or speech impairments
- Terminal illnesses, often in hospice and palliative care settings
- Learning disabilities, including, but not limited to, math difficulties, language difficulties, or motor difficulties
- Mental illnesses, includes but not limited to, post traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, depression, emotional balanced disorders, substance abuse
- Health and wellness issues, including, but not limited to, cardiac care and well seniors

There are many reasons for seeking music therapy, including the following:

- Music therapy is used in general hospitals to alleviate pain in conjunction with anesthesia or pain medication; elevate patients' mood and countered depression; promote movement for physical rehabilitation; calm or sedate, often to induce sleep; countered apprehension or fear; and lessen muscle tension for the purpose of relaxation, including the autonomic nervous system.
- Music therapy in skilled nursing facilities is used to increase or maintain level of physical, mental, and social/emotional functioning, including to manage symptoms related to Alzheimer's disease and other forms of dementia. The sensory and intellectual stimulation of music therapy can enhance an individual's quality of life.
- Music therapists offer related service interventions on Individualized Education Plans in special education. Music therapy strategies are used to strengthen numerical areas such as readiness to learn (pre-academic skills), academics, social skills, behavioral goals and communication.
- Music therapy in behavioral health settings provides music experiences that allow individuals to explore personal feelings, make positive changes in mood and emotional states, and practice problem-solving coping skills, and self-expression.

In Nebraska, scope of practice of licensure is exclusive. "Mental Health Practice means the provision of treatment, assessment, psychotherapy, counseling, or equivalent activities to individuals, couples, families, or group for behavioral, cognitive, social, mental, or emotional disorders, including interpersonal or personal situations; and includes the initial assessment of organic mental or emotional disorders for the purpose of referral or consultation." 172 NAC 94 Music therapy appears to be a process consisting of techniques, practices, and methods necessary to identify, assess, and intervene with a client population for the primary purpose of providing or resulting in the clients optimal mental health. Of course it is not the music therapists' only focus, but the mental health focus is clearly present.

It is with the above data and reasoning, our group recommends the technical review committee to examine the feasibility of professional association certification or state title certification (if fiscally realistic) rather than licensure for the applicant group.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Anne Buettner, M.A.

Legislative Chair

AAMFT

Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist

Licensed Independent Mental Health Practitioner

Clinical Fellow, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

Approved Supervisor, American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy

3008 West Stolley Park Road, Suite 4

Grand Island, NE 68801

P 308 383 7000

F 308 384 7968

buettnerp@aol.com